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Yasuyuki Kawashima et al.
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Group Art Unit 1657
Examiner Kailash C. Srivastava, Ph.D.
Response Dated February 4, 2008
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Amendments to the Specification

Please make the following amendments to the specification. Changes relative to the immediate prior version are shown using strikethrough to identify deleted material and underlining to identify added material.

Please replace the second full paragraph on page 13 (lines 12-27) with the following amended paragraph:

— The dead bacteria and the live bacteria are classified and counted using the optical information thus obtained. Compared to dead bacteria, the material within live bacteria is resistant to fluorescent staining due to the action of the bacterial membrane (~~cellular wall~~). This fact is used in accordance with the present invention to process a specimen using a first fluorescent dye with the conditions that dead bacteria are subjected to adequate fluorescent staining, and live bacteria are subjected to either weak fluorescent staining or essentially ~~no-fluorescently~~ fluorescent staining as compared to dead bacteria. In this way, a difference in the degree of staining arises between the live bacteria and the dead bacteria, such that a difference is produced in the intensity of fluorescent light detected from each bacterium. —